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## **Amigos Don't Let Amigos Drive Drunk This Cinco de Mayo**

*Remember to Designate a Sober Driver Before the 5<sup>th</sup> of May Celebration Begins*

The Governor's Office of Highway Safety is joining with the National Highway Traffic Safety administration and other federal, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials across the nation to remind all of those who plan on using alcohol during Cinco de Mayo festivities this year to act responsibly by designating their sober drivers before going out to celebrate.

"Cinco de Mayo has become a big night out for many, particularly young adults. But it is also a very dangerous night out because of alcohol or drug impaired drivers. That's why we are reminding those celebrating this year to be sure and designate their sober driver in advance – before the festivities begin," said GOHS Director Richard Fimbres. "We also want to remind everyone that Arizona's 17 DUI Task Forces will be actively removing impaired drivers during these celebrations to make our streets safer."

Over the past 5 years since 1999, an average of 43 percent of all highway fatalities each year on May 5 and overnight into the early morning on May 6 were caused by impaired drivers with blood alcohol content (BAC) levels of 0.08 percent and above, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

"Whether you are just meeting a few friends after work at the neighborhood Mexican restaurant or attending some other kind of Cinco de Mayo celebration, if you plan on using alcohol, we want you to remember to never drive impaired – and to never let your friends drive if they show signs of impairment," Fimbres said.

Fimbres said that designating a sober driver before the local celebration begins and making sure friends don't drive impaired are just two of several, simple steps to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving when groups go out partying.

If you are planning to use alcohol on Cinco de Mayo:

- Remember to designate your sober driver before going out to celebrate;
- Be sure and eat during the evening; load up on the chips and salsa and other appetizers, and then enjoy your other favorite Mexican foods during the evening;
- If impaired, don't even think about getting behind the wheel. Ask a sober friend for a ride home; call a cab, or friend or family member to come and get you; use other mass transit if available; or just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
- Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.

Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes during 2003; more than 470 were killed in Arizona that year because of alcohol-impaired drivers. Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year. According to NHTSA, about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

"Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk because the consequences are serious and real," Fimbres said. "Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant. And remember on Cinco de Mayo, *Amigos Don't Let Amigos Drive Drunk*."

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**Designate a sober driver.**